

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 4271

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: NI

SUBJ: BIO DATA ON BRIGADIER O OBASANJO

1. MISSION PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER WAS MEMBER OF 1974 CLASS OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF DEFENSE STUDIES, LONDON. ONE OF HIS CLASSMATES, BRIGADIER O OBASANJO, HAS BECOME CHIEF OF NIGERIAN ARMED FORCES AS RESULT OF RECENT COUP.

2. FOLLOWING IS EXCERPT ON OBASNAJO FROM BIOGRAPHIC REGISTER OF ROYAL COLLEGE ISSUED TO CLASS OF 1974:

BRIGADIER OLU OBASANJO IS 36 AND WAS EDUCATED AT THE BAPTIST BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL, ABEOKUTA. HE WAS COMMISSIONED INTO THE NIGERIAN ARMY IN 1959 FROM MONS OFFICER CADET SCHOOL. HE SERVED IN THE CAMEROONS AND IN THE CONGO WITH 5TH BATTALION OF THE NIGERIAN ARMY BEFORE HE WAS TRANSFERRED TO THE ARMY ENGINEERS. HE ATTENDED ROYAL ENGINEER YOUNG OFFICERS' POST DEGREE COURSE IN CHATHAM IN 1962-1963 AND SURVEY COURSE IN NEWBURY. HE COMMANDED THE 1ST ENGINEER SQUADRON BEFORE ATTENDING STAFF COLLEGE, WELLINGTON INDIA IN 1965. IN 1967, HE WAS APPOINTED A GARRISON COMMANDER. HE TOOK OVER COMMAND OF THE 3RD MARINE COMMANDO DIVISION IN 1969, AND LEAD THEM TO VICTORY IN THE NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR. HE WAS THE CHIEF ENGINEER FOR THE NIGERIAN ARMY UNTIL JOINING THE RCDS.

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3. PAO RECALLS THAT OBASANJO WAS ONE OF THE TWO NIGERIANS IN THE 1974 ROYAL COLLEGE CLASS (ILIYA BASLLLA, ALSO A BRIGADIER, WAS THE OTHER). OF MEDIUM HEIGHT, APPROXIMATELY 5' 10", OBASANJO WEIGHS 190 LBS, IS VERY DARK SKINNED, HAS TRIBAL SCARS ON BOTH

CHEEKS. MARRIED, HIS WIFE' NAME IS REMI, AND THEY HAVE FOUR CHILDREN: TWO BOYS, AGES 4 AND 2; AND TWO GIRLS, AGES 6 AND 5.

4. PAO'S PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS OF OBASANJO WERE THAT HE WAS ACTIVE, INTERESTED, JOVIAL AND STRONG-WILLED. AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN EVERY EVENT, HE MADE A CREDITABLE SHOWING IN EACH OF THEM AND GAVE SEVERAL INTERESTING TALKS, USUALLY ON AFRICAN SUBJECTS, IN COLLEGE SEMINARS AND OTHER MEETINGS. HIS BRIEFING ON THE NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR WAS PARTICULARLY WELL RECEIVED. OBASANJO WAS RESPECTED BY HIS CLASSMATES WHO INCLUDED TWO OTHER AFRICAN COLLEAGUES. ALTHOUGH NOT TOO INVOLVED SOCIALLY BECAUSE OF THE AGES OF HIS CHILDREN OBASANJO WAS WELL LIKED AND HIS CONTRIBUTION WAS APPRECIATED WHEN HE TOOK PART IN SOCIAL EVENTS. UPON DEPARTURE FROM THE ROYAL COLLEGE, HE SAID HIS NEXT ASSIGNMENT WOULD BE OVERALL OPERATION AND CONTROL OF NIGERIAN OIL RESOURCES. STREATOR

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